A Cleare

VINDICATION

OF

ROMAN CATHOLICKS

FROM

A Fowle Asperſion:

To Wit,

That they have and do promote a bloody and wicked Deſigne of the Pope *and* Cardinals.

BODLEIANA BIBLIOTHECA

Printed in the yeer 1659.

A VINDICATION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICKS

FROM

A Foul Aspersion:

TO WIT,

That they have and do promote a bloody and wicked Design of the Pope and Cardinals.

Printed in the Year 1679.

A clear Vindication of Roman Catholicks, &c.

THere hath been and at present is, much noise that Roman Catholicks have a long time, and still do drive on a design of reducing the three Nations under the yoke and power of *Rome*, and for the easier and surer effecting thereof, that they have a dispensation from the Pope to dissemble and deny their Religion, to professe any other, so to pack Parliament and Army, to make and head Sects, whereby to set up, and pull down whomsoever shall seem to advance or hinder the work, be he King or other; and that in order hereunto my late King was sentenced to looose his head. At first I looke upon this noise as a piece of discontent or malice as well by reason of its strangenesse, as in regard I observed the abetters of it to be either mean, prejudiced, or easie of belief: but seeing it lately confirmed by two sober and eminent persons, Mr. *Bryan* in his good Old Cause, and Mr. *Baxter* in his key for Catholicks, I began to suspect the worst

yet suspended my judgment, charity forbidding to judge any unheard. At length suspicion breeding curiosity and desire to sound this noise to the bottome, I made means to converse with the party concerned in it, and not long after lighting on the chief, both of their laity and Clergy: I took occasion to speak of the report went of them. They all protested as they were Christians, that it was a black malitious slander raised by their adversaries to render them odious to the end to bereave them at pleasure, of their liberties, fortunes, and lives, for hated persons they know are fitted for the lash of ambition, covetousness and fury. I expected some plausible excuse, but meeting with a flat denial I grew at a losse what to reply having not any proof to offer. Wherat they said, Sir your silence gives us, you have not any proof for this report, wherefore we may and do claim the just priviledge graunted by the law to all, which is to be esteemed innocent and treated as such until proof comes to make good the charge. But Sir, for your further satisfaction we will prove our innocence, first because this pretended practise, as to the King, was inconsistent with our interest, for albeit he was of a different judgment, nevertheless being satisfied our principles were agreeable with all sorts of governments, that we were loyal and harmless subjects; he afforded us a good and honsome being, now the removal of him we could not but see, would worse our condition by delivering us up to hands we had no assurance of, more

then hard usage as we have since found by woful experience: next, this pretended practise is against our Religion, which teacheth obedience to all superiours lawful commands, and that under pain of sin and damnation, disallowseth doing even the least hurt, though it were certain the greatest good should come thereof and is not sin a hurt, and what sin greater then rebellion, murther, denying ones Religion, and professing contrary? neither can raising a mist from eighty eight, or the Gunpowder plot, anywise darken her brightness, or blemish her beauty, in as much as those were clear effects of interest and passion which she makes her business to check and restrain. True it is, that conceiving our Religion to be safest and best, we hold it charity to impart, and reason it to others, but that we go about to propagate it by violent and unworthy means, is so false, that we abhor and detest the very thought of it: then had we such a dispensation, sure we would make advantage of it by saving or advanceing our selves which every one may see we do not: moreover if the Parliament and Army be packed by us, clearly they are at our devotion and disposal; if so, what senseless fools must we be to suffer them to give liberty to all, and refuse it to us to keep up others rights, & let ours fall to the ground. Last of all, to stop the mouth of iniquity it self, we call God to witness, that we verily believe ther is not in the Pope any power to graunt any such dispensation, and if any such date at any time shew its face

shal we

we declare to all the world that it is a meer forgery and impostor, which deserves no lesse then to be burnt by the publick hand of the Hangman; as a seditious and infamous libel. It will be instanced that upon account of this dispensation, one in *New-castle* became a Jew, was circumcised, another in *London* upon the same score preach't among the Quakers in a millers habit; still this is but saying we require proof: now to shew our confidence none can be brought, we make this fair offer, if any be produced out of the Parliament, Army, or sectaries that can make it out he really hath any such dispensation, we shall be content to indure the sadest doom envy or malice can censure us to; but if this be impossible as we are sure it is, we leave it to any Christian that hath the least sense of feeling of innocence wronged, to judge whether Mr. *Prynne*, and Mr. *Backster* be not bound by the laws of God and man to make us reparation by undeceiving and disabusing the people, whom they have so highly provoked, and incensed against us by this horrid calumny. It is St. *Augustine* and the Roman Catholick tenet, that what is wrongfully taken away, as to estate or fame, unless it be restored, the sin wil never be forgiven, what then shall become of Mr. *Prynne* and Mr. *Backsters* confidence of eternity, so long as they persist, nay gloty in their injustice, of detracting without the least remorse or purpose of amendment? Gentlemen, I confesse you have given me full satisfaction, and I am sory for your

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ſufferings, and wiſh it were in my power to right you, but all I can do is to publiſh as much, which I promiſe you faithfully I ſhall not fail to do, and ſo I take my leave and reſt.

Your thankful and ſatisfied

friend and ſervant.

L. P.

FINIS.